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Commission for Social Development
Forty-sixth session
6-15 February 2008
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: promoting full employment and decent work for all

Statement submitted by Elizabeth Seton Federation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.5/2008/1.

07-61296 (E) 071207

Statement

1. Relevant to the theme of "Promotion of Full Employment and Decent Work for all", the theme this 46th session of the Commission for Social Development, we find that the fact of the nearly 200 million persons endeavouring to encounter work by the act of migration is a core issue for consideration. The human dignity that results from an ability to provide life's necessities for one's family is a motivating factor for many peoples of the world to leave their homes, and even their countries, to earn enough money to feed, house, educate, and provide medical care for those for wh they are responsible. This is often referred to as the migration push factor. The increasing availabilit of work, especially service work, particularly in developed countries which are experiencing an ageing population, as well as a population focused on technical, banking and finance, and industrial work is often referred as the pull factor. There will always be jobs in need of workers in certain area the world, as well as workers without jobs in others. Migration as an issue will always be with us.

Incentives for migration

2. Many migrants move from rural areas in their own countries to the cities, or migrate to countri outside of their own in search of work to provide bare sustenance for their extended families. Other noting the disparities between their non-existent jobs or low wages and the prospects of higher wag in other areas, migrate in order to improve their lifestyle. Still others, in countries without pensions adequate provision in times of disaster, seek to provide this buffer.

Migrant recruitment

3. Traditionally, migrants would risk travelling to a country where they only hoped that opportunities might provide them with the wages that they needed. Increasingly, through more formalized and globalized recruitment, employers use increasingly developed enterprises to recruit workers. There is a bifurcation of the stream of foreign workers: a skilled work force with good compensation and benefits, and an unskilled workforce that is paid low wages and experiences unsatisfactory conditions with few or no benefits. Moreover, in the case of undocumented workers, they are vulnerable to much exploitation, since they can be threatened with exposure and deportatio Compounding the vulnerability for migrants is the loss of earned benefits. Where foreign workers d not have the possibility of gaining status for employment, the wage scale, local employment opportunities, and observance of labour laws are compromised. With respect to skilled foreign worker there exists the phenomenon of "brain drain" that depletes the country of origin of its trained workers, and complements the lack of skilled workers in the receiving country at low cost to them.

Feminization of migration

4. More than half of migrants are now women. Many more migrants are children. Since these groups usually begin with fewer rights, they are even more vulnerable to exploitation. There is also tremendous impact on families when mothers leave dependents behind. One of the exponentially increasing abuses related to migration is that of trafficking. When a migrant is controlled by the recruiter, there is a very short step to indentured servitude and slavery. Increasingly this involves me as well.

Human rights issues

5. Many nations have labour regulations protecting temporary migrant workers. Temporary migrant workers under valid contracts, however, are frequently subject to discrimination, deplorable working and living conditions, and low wages. If they complain, they are likely to endanger their re-employment for following seasons. These workers often suffer lack of access to redress of grievances.

6. Labour laws are especially ineffective in the case of undocumented temporary migrant workers. These workers are vulnerable to deportation if they are reported by retaliating employers. There are insufficient protections against fragmentation of families of migrant workers, especially because of the nature of temporary labour contracts and also in the event that a family member is subject to deportation.

7. Among the consequences of deportation are: break-up of families who have finally been able to reunite, and failure to recognize the benefits accrued to the receiving country by a statistically more law abiding group who contribute to the tax base and are willing to do more labour-intensive work. This happens because when people who are recruited to work in a country where visas are not available and they enter without documents, they are often deemed criminals for that reason alone.

Remittances

8. There is a global consensus that remittances are the most effective form of development for the majority of countries that are known as the sending countries. Although there is much discussion of a more organized use of remittances by countries, the fact remains that these are private funds. Governments have an opportunity to facilitate the transfer of these funds and their productive investment by families.

9. Recommendations

(a) Include migrants themselves when discussing the "Promotion of full employment and decent work for all".

(b) Focus on the creation of decent work in the "sending countries" so that migration is a choice and not a necessity.

(c) Compensate women for work in the care sector so that they do not have to migrate.

(d) Work toward a fair globalization to create a context where developing countries have equal opportunity to complete in the global market.

(e) Explore, in multilateral agreements, the right for people to move across borders, as in the case with of capital and commodities.

(f) Work internationally on a safe and supervised management of migration so that as long as it remains a strategy for economic survival, human beings are not exploited as commodities.

(g) Agree upon a need for a rights-based approach to human migration

(h) Increase the number of member states who sign on to existing international protective measures especially the UN Convention on the Protection of all Migrant Workers and their Families.

(i) Continue to address the need to mitigate global warming which already displaces many people in developing countries.

(j) Address the demand side of sex exploitation to eliminate trafficking.

Note: Statement endorsed and supported by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Congregation of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas (also known as Sisters of Mercy), National Council of Women of the United States, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, VIVAT International, Soroptimist International, Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, International Association of Schools of Social Work, Salesian Missions, Dominican Leadership Conference, Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants, Pax Romana, Loretto Community, UNANIMA International, School Sisters of Notre Dame and Sisters of Loretto.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: promoting full employment and decent work for all

Statement submitted by World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.5/2008/1.

07-61305 (E) 101207

Statement

On the occasion of this 46th session of the Commission on Social Development, relevant to the priority theme of Full Employment and Decent Work for All, the NGOs endorsing this statement recognize that two of the world's major concerns have a disproportional effect on youth: unemployment and HIV/AIDS:

1. Youth (persons between 15 and 24 years of age) comprise about one-fifth of the world's population, but half of the total unemployed global workforce and recent data from the International Labour Organization indicate that over one-fourth of all youth in sub-Saharan Africa, one-third of all youth in Central and Eastern Europe, and roughly one in seven youths in developed countries are neither in education nor in employment.[1]

2. Among today's youth, nearly 12 million out of 89 million are living with HIV/AIDS. Young women are several times more likely than young men to be infected with HIV. In nearly 20 African countries 5% or more of women ages 15 to 24 are infected.

3. We affirm the governments having taken special note of this in the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS in 2006 and are committing themselves to address these concerns using comprehensive and evidence-based strategies.[2]

4. Yet, as Stephen Lewis, then the Special Advisor to the Secretary General on HIV and AIDS stated at the 16th International World AIDS Conference: Youth have been given a voice but it's still a limited and marginalized voice, reflecting the hostile ambiguity of the adult world. The figures are brutal and stark: fully fifty per cent of new infections are of persons between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. And yet who can deny the appalling absence of programs for, and engagement of, young people in the fight against the pandemic.

5. With this in mind and based on the grassroots experiences of our members in developing countries throughout the world we recommend linking the needs generated by both youth unemployment and the HIV/AIDS pandemic to assist in realizing decent employment for all.

6. Recommendations:

    1. Include youth in country level policy-making and program-implementation boards related to both employment and HIV/AIDS. The creativity and fresh vision of youth participating on an equal level with others, specifically through NGOs active in this field, can lead to innovative and effective approaches to both of these difficult issues.

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[1] *Youth employment: impact, challenges and opportunities for social development*", note by the Secretariat. E/CN.5/2007/3, 29 January 2007. I. Background, 1.

[2] *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/262, 15 June 2006.

2. Develop, with the participation of youth and youth-focused NGOs, specific employment programs which link the needs generated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the energy and abilities of youth; e.g. develop a youth corps of workers to provide for the needs for education regarding the prevention of AIDS, the needs for care of orphans, for those who are infected and for the elderly. Enlist the aid of UN technical assistance programs (e.g. that are located in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs) to develop effective international partnerships and fund-raising strategies to provide the resources needed to implement such a program.

   The long-term economic benefits to a country which developed a cadre of credentialed youth health care workers could assist in providing health service being lost through the migration of professionals from a developing country and also to providing meaningful and decent employment for youth.
   A program such as that outlined above could also respond to the loss of human capacity being experienced in country after country which has been overwhelmed by all the dimensions of the HIV/AIDS crisis. As Stephen Lewis suggests "the capacity crisis illuminates, more than anything else, what is needed. There are solutions: investment in the public sector and in extensive ongoing training can begin to fill the gap." However, these elements need to be resourced by the donor community but under the guidance of country-level policies and programs in which youth have played a major role.

3. Provide support for two youth employment initiatives which have great potential for involving youth in generating needed employment and enhancing their productive participation in the economic life of their countries: the YES Campaign and Youth Employment Network (YEN).

   The YES Campaign strives to build the individual capacity of youth in order to create sustainable livelihoods and to establish an entrepreneurial culture where young people move toward formal employment. With the support of diverse stakeholders, networks organize and facilitate customized programming that relies on youth to drive the implementation process. Since its launch in 2002, the YES Campaign has shown that young people, if given access to the right resources, can effectively craft their own advancement opportunities.[3]

   YEN (Youth Employment Network of the ILO) views young people as partners in devising solutions to a common problem and

   - seeks to ensure that its policy recommendations support the aspirations of young people rather than impose perceived 'needs' upon them.

[3] http://yesweb.org/thematic%20publications_Kenya%20Summit%202006/state_of_the_yes_campaign.pdf.

- works to ensure representative youth groups play central roles in the development and implementation of National Action Plans on youth employment.[4]

We would further encourage these two initiatives to examine the links between youth employment and HIV/AIDS to increase their impact on the millions of youth affected and infected by the pandemic and to ensure their participation in the economic life of their societies.

We believe that educating and funding youth educators to deliver HIV/AIDS education programs in primary and secondary schools as a part of National Plans to address HIV/AIDS will result in much more effective educational efforts. Our experience has shown that relationships among youth are often more influential in changing behaviour. Additionally, such a program would result in a higher rate of youth employment.

4. As noted earlier, the rate of infection of young women now is significantly higher than that of young men. We also note that with the devastation of the AIDS pandemic, young women have increasingly become more vulnerable to infection as they join migrant streams and have greater need for employment in the formal sector of the economy. Consequently, it is imperative that each of the above recommendations should have a gender dimension to ensure that young women are proportionally represented in efforts to provide solutions to youth unemployment.

Notes

Statement endorsed and supported by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and UNANIMA International.

[4] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/yen/challenge/index.htm.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: promoting full employment and decent work for all

Statement submitted by Solidarité africaine pour la préservation de la paix et de l'environnement en République Centrafricaine, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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Statement

1. Civil society, i.e., we as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), make up a network of persons from every region of the world. Those persons constitute a diversified group of development specialists, researchers, university academics, pedagogues, students, activists, businessmen and businesswomen, decision-makers, politicians and financiers and donors of all ages. The mission of NGOs is to inform, mobilize and encourage commitment on the part of individuals and organizations active in promoting social justice and global development.

2. The forty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development must not simply be a forum. It should be a place where new campaigns in favour of development are launched and new ideas included in the agenda should be dealt with and work on them commenced. It will be an opportunity for participants to develop action plans for political, organizational and personal change. It will also be an opportunity for building new strategic alliances, enhancing advocacy campaigns and coordinating sustainable social development strategies. It will be a unique opportunity for sharing and expanding our knowledge in the area of elimination of barriers.

3. It will also have the task of working collectively to formulate alternatives with a view to real economic and social development and development of international structures that enhance and strengthen a world in which globalization reigns.

4. As we see it, the session will have to include the development of ways and means of transforming our own organizations in order to create for ourselves new models and tools needed in a globalized world.

5. The session might also involve an examination of different strategies aimed at equitable globalization. Speakers might take up the contradictions existing within the new world economic order, while shedding light on the various avenues to be explored with a view to understanding and arriving at economic and social justice throughout the world.

6. Today's world is faced with new challenges that call for a convergence of approaches and solutions as well as more viable and stronger leadership. The session should be able to scrutinize those challenges in order to show the way in which society permits the expression of human rights and social development.

7. In a workshop environment, leaders must offer various perspectives connected with the different challenges and an opportunity to take part in discussions regarding the different fields of social development. Those participating in workshops will refer to the human rights framework to bring together and examine the connections between politics, economic and social change and religion.

8. Gender mainstreaming in development agencies, microcredit initiatives and budgeting based on equality between men and women are just some of the strategies used in recent years to promote the economic rights of individuals. Sessions on skill development will offer analytical tools to help understand and influence existing international cooperation institutions in all fields.